GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:16
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2007
USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR NON -AGRICULTURAL PURPOSE
Panda Shri Prabodh;Singh Shri Ganesh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the huge area of arable/cultivable/agricultural land is being offered to industrialists for non-agricultural purposes including development of Special Economic Zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any survey/study regarding continuous decline in arable/cultivable/agricultural land as a result thereof;

(d) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to increase the arable/cultivable/agricultural land by converting barren/dry land into cultivable land;

(f) if so, the land in terms of hectare that has been made arable/cultivable/agricultural so far in the country during the last three years, State-wise;

(g) whether the Union Government is coordinating with the States to workout a solution to check the decline in arable/cultivable/agricultural land; and

(h) if so, the steps taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA)

(a) & (b): Land is a State subject. Each State has its specific land acquisition policy based upon the Land Acquisition Act. Acquisition of land by the state Government for various purposes is governed by their respective policies and procedures. The Board of Approvals for Special Economic Zones constituted in the Ministry of Commerce considers only those proposals which have been duly recommended by the State Governments. The State Governments have been advised that in case of land acquisition for Special Economic Zones, first priority should be given to acquisition of waste and barren land and if necessary single crop agricultural land could be acquired. State-wise list of formal and in principal approval for setting up of Special Economic Zones along-with details of the land is given in Annexure.

(c) & (d): The land use statistics data indicates that the arable/ cultivable/agricultural land has reduced from 185 million ha. in 1980 to 183 million ha. in 2003. Also during same period, land under non agricultural uses has increased from 19.66 million ha. to 24.48 million ha.

(e) & (f): Centrally Sponsored Programmes, namely,

(i) National Watershed Development Project in Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA)

(ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone Rivers (RVP & FPR)

(iii) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA)

(iv) Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS)

(v) Dessert Development Programme (DDP)

(vi) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

(vii) Integrated Watershed Development Project (IWDP)

(viii) Watershed Development Fund and

(ix) Externally Aided Projects are being implemented by the Government of India .These programmes help i n developing the degraded lands.

(g) & (h): State Land Use Boards have been constituted in almost all States and Union Territories. These Boards under the Chairmanship of the Chief Ministers or Other Senior functionaries of the State Governments. These Boards are mandated to keep a watch on the diversion of agriculture land to non-agricultural uses in the State. In addition to this a check list has also been circulated to the State Governments with a view to screen the proposals of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) by the SEZ Approval Board.